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ABSTRACT

In response to the growing attention on China's educational system, a two-day workshop on education in China was sponsored. The purpose of the conference was to assess what already is known about China; to identify issues which might profitably be investigated by future visitors to China; and to encourage further interest in Chinese education among American educational organizations and specialists. Among the 30 participants were nine recent visitors to the People's Republic, other China scholars, secondary school educators, and representatives of professional education organizations. The opening presentation posed a series of questions dealing with the basic values of the Chinese educational system. Two brief presentations on the history and philosophy of twentieth century Chinese education are reviewed. A recent visitor's impressions on administration, administrators, planning and funding, curriculum, students, and teachers in China are related. The conclusion notes that the session barely scratched the surface of China's formal education system, but did stimulate considerable thought about the role that education plays in Chinese society. An appendix contains suggestions for interviewers when visiting China and a long series of as yet unanswered questions on Chinese education. (Author/KSM)

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EDUCATION
IN THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Wingspread Conference

sponsored by

National Committee on United States-China Relations

and

Committee on Scholarly Communication
with the People's Republic of China
of the
National Academy of Sciences

in cooperation with

The Johnson Foundation

April 1973

Report prepared by

Robert Goldberg

INTRODUCTION

The Johnson Foundation was pleased to join with the National Committee on United States-China Relations, Inc. and the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China of the National Academy of Sciences in convening the Wingspread Conference on Education in the People's Republic of China.

This Wingspread meeting was one in a series of three in which The Johnson Foundation cooperated with the convening organizations. The others in the series were:

- Wingspread Conference on Science in the People's Republic of China
- Wingspread Conference on Health Care in the People's Republic of China

The Wingspread Conference on Education in the People's Republic of China brought together scholars and educational specialists who had recently visited the People's Republic of China, with other representatives of the educational community. The recent visitors to China shared their impressions and attempted a joint assessment of educational progress and problems in China. The discussions included consideration of educational exchanges between the People's Republic of China and the United States.

The Johnson Foundation endeavors to inform a larger public about Wingspread conferences through publications and other media presentations, and with the belief that many persons are interested in education in China, this publication is made available.

An earlier Wingspread Report summarized a 1972 Wingspread Conference on China in the Schools: Directions and Priorities. That report deals with teaching about China in American secondary schools. In the introduction to that publication, we explain the interest of The Johnson Foundation in China as follows:*

> *"The Johnson Foundation's interest in China stems from the early years of this institution when in 1959, The Johnson Foundation cooperated with the University of Cincinnati in a conference on United States relations with China. A major conference on Mainland China was convened in 1966 by the University of Chicago and the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, in cooperation with The Johnson Foundation. This event provided one of the early opportunities for Americans in the Midwest to learn about China from persons who had visited the People's Republic of China. It is significant to recall that at that time United States' citizens were not free to enter Mainland China, and therefore our principal source of information was journalists and scholars from other countries.*
>
> *In the past two years, The Johnson Foundation has cooperated with the National Committee on United States-China Relations in several projects with the goal of extending knowledge in the United States about the People's Republic of China. These efforts are predicated on the belief that citizens must be informed if they are to have responsibility in evaluating this nation's policies relating to other countries, including the People's Republic of China."*

Leslie Paffrath
President
The Johnson Foundation

* *Copies are available on request. Address: The Johnson Foundation, Racine, Wisconsin 53401.*

EDUCATION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

With the growing rapprochement between the United States and China have come increasing opportunities to learn about China's development from her own perspective. A central focus of attention for the several thousand Americans who have visited China since the spring of 1971 (and for the millions who have heard or read their reports) have been China's education system and her reforms in such areas as curriculum content, work-study programs, teacher training, and community involvement. Although American scholars and educators have come away with differing perceptions of the effectiveness of these experiments, they have agreed on the need to understand China's educational revolution, to assess the impact of educational policies upon the society as a whole, and to determine whether there are aspects of China's recent experience from which other nations might learn.

In April of 1973, these and other issues were reviewed in a two-day workshop on Education in the People's Republic of China sponsored by the National Committee on United States-China Relations and the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China, in cooperation with The Johnson Foundation, at Wingspread, the conference center of The Johnson Foundation in Racine, Wisconsin.

The purpose of the conference was three-fold:

- to assess what already is known about education in China today;
- to identify issues which might profitably be investigated by future visitors to China; and
- to encourage further interest in Chinese education among American educational organizations and specialists.

The 30 conference participants, of whom nine were recent visitors to the People's Republic of China, included China scholars, secondary school educators, and representatives of professional education organizations. They agreed at the outset that any exploration of China's educational system must be placed in the broad context of the history and philosophy of the Communist Revolution. They also noted that education, like many aspects of Chinese society, is still in the process of reconstruction following the Cultural Revolution. Consequently, the participants could not expect to obtain a final or complete picture since, by China's own acknowledgement, the education programs observed by recent visitors are in many respects tentative and experimental.

Professor C.T. Hu of Columbia University opened the workshop by posing a series of questions dealing with the basic values of China's new educational system. How, he asked, have the Communists used education to secure the allegiance of the generation brought up before 1949 under a system dominated by either the Kuomintang, Japanese, or Warlords? How are individual conversions to communism reinforced, and in what manner are personal goals identified with those of the state? How and to what extent have the values of the Chinese revolution been instilled in the youth who must carry on the social and

political transformation when the older revolutionaries pass from the scene?

According to Professor Hu, three central ideas shape the content of Chinese education and the values underlying it: nationalism, whereby a new set of educational practices consonant with socialist development has prevailed over earlier, capitalist-dominated ideas, and a new type of technician-generalist (trained for the most part in China) has replaced the Western-trained specialist elite; science, especially the effort to define knowledge as dialectical and to consider scientific learning useful only if derived from practice and placed in the service of the state; and populism, with its emphasis on making all ideas and actions widely understandable in terms of the class struggle.[1]

Hu perceived the major developments in Chinese education since 1949 as an effort to build from the bottom up and to include everyone as a part of the educational process. Thus, rather than train an elite whose knowledge would filter down to the mass of people, the Communists have given primary attention to those most educationally disadvantaged. They have implemented new programs to re-educate and re-orient the older generation, and, through a series of far-reaching experiments, developed an educational system which attempts to train each person to be a new kind of leader: the "new socialist man," an innovative, selfless, and concerned individual, dedicated to the maintenance and continuation of the revolution. If the Communists have been able to prevent the re-emergence of an educated

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1. For a fuller report on Professor Hu's visit to China and observations, see his "Education in China - Redness versus Expertness" in Perspectives on Education (published by Teachers' College, Columbia University), Vol. VI, No. 2 Spring, 1973.

elite while, at the same time, training enough technicians to continue the process of national reconstruction, then they will consider their educational restructuring a success. But, as Hu noted, in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese themselves are unsure what their educational experiment has accomplished or will lead to in the future.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although the conference was mainly deliberative and designed to enable China scholars and educators to exchange information on current educational practices, Professors Peter Seybolt of the University of Vermont and Donald Munro of the University of Michigan offered brief presentations on the history and philosophy of Chinese education in this century.[2]

Professor Seybolt compared educational developments during the Yenan period (1937-1945) with those in China during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1970) and noted that the former has served as both a model for emulation and a negative example for reformers. Early in the Yenan period, the Communists sought to "standardize" education in an effort to get away from the haphazard "guerrilla work style" that characterized the Long March and to revitalize and rebuild the

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2. For further information, see Peter J. Seybolt, "The Yenan Revolution in Mass Education" in The China Quarterly, No. 48, October/December, 1971 and Revolutionary Education in China (White Plaines, New York: International Arts and Science Press, 1973). Also, see Donald Munro, "The Malleability of Man in Chinese Marxism" in The China Quarterly, No. 48, October/December, 1971 and "Man, State, and School" in Michel Oksenberg, ed., China's Developmental Experience (New York: Praeger, 1973).

communist movement itself. Standardization took the form of a centralized educational bureaucracy, consolidation of schools, formulation of multi-course curriculum with uniform texts and requirements for all schools, and professionalization of teaching and administration.

By late 1943 it was recognized that these educational reforms were not working in the impoverished Shensi-Kansu-Ninghsia Border Region (where Yenan was located), and, more importantly, were not addressing the immediate problems of the Border Region or meeting the needs of the students.

To remedy the defects of this system, as well as to reduce its cost, the Communists developed two new types of schools: the minpan ("people-managed") schools, and K'angta ("Resist Japan" University). The former, mostly elementary schools, stressed self-reliance in funding and curriculum design, and encouraged popular interest, initiative, and participation in educational, social, and political developments. Teaching was deprofessionalized and those with practical skills were invited to teach. Courses were reduced to the basics: principally literacy and math (each with a politicized content) and hygiene.

Schools at all levels were directly linked to production organs, the military, or governing agencies, thereby providing a concrete demonstration of the unity of theory and practice. The line between education and work (or, as Professor Munro noted, between value and fact) was consciously blurred -- much as it again would be two decades later.

K'angta, the second of the new-style war-time institutions, was designed to train political cadres for the struggle against the Japanese. Terms were relatively short (6-8 months) and courses focused on what the cadres had to know immediately. Self-reliance was stressed; students and teachers developed their own curriculum, constructed their own schools, and looked after their own physical needs. It was at K'angta that the "mass-line style" of "induction-conception-practice" was developed as a pedagogical method. The "mass-line style" stressed that empathy between cadres and the people was vital for good governance. Cadres were taught to work directly with the people to discover appropriate ways of resolving problems. What cadres thought were good policies was often modified by the local experiences and resources of the people. And what once seemed an insoluble problem to the people was often solved with the administrative and organizational know-how of the cadre.

Although minpan schools survived the reorganization of the educational system throughout China after 1949, the Communists, once in power, encountered educational problems different from those of the Yenan days. New priorities, as well as the need to consolidate administrative control and to train larger numbers of cadres and technicians, required new policies. The mid-1950's became a period of heavy borrowing from the Soviet Union in educational as well as social and economic realms. Minpan schools were reduced in number,[3] course

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3. In fact, a directive of the Education Ministry in 1952 stipulated that minpan schools could be accredited only after proving themselves for three years. Several years later, Mao said that without the minpan schools many would be deprived of an opportunity for education.

loads in secondary schools and colleges were increased, professionalism in teaching was reintroduced, and administration became more centralized. Although impressive gains were made between 1953 and 1957, especially in the expansion of educational facilities and the introduction of advanced scientific and technical knowledge, by 1957 Mao Tse-tung was concerned that the educational system was actually more Soviet than Chinese. In many respects it was not relevant to agrarian China's stage of economic development, and it was not fostering revolutionary social transformation. To rectify this situation he called for a return to the style of education popularized during the Yenan days.

In the late 1950's, a number of Yenan measures were reinstituted, but along with many other programs they often did not survive the disenchantment with the Great Leap Forward period. One function of the Cultural Revolution, Professor Seybolt noted, was to clarify the (real or imagined) lines of educational conflict (between Chinese and Russian models, elitist and mass styles of education) and to generate a massive effort to make education more relevant to the needs of China and her people.[4] That effort, based on a reaffirmation of Yenan principles, has taken the form of shortening the number of years spent in school, changing admissions procedures, emphasizing practical application of materials studied, politicizing all courses, and changing the governing structures of schools. [5]

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4. Professor Michel Oksenberg of Columbia University noted that the issues involved in educational reform were more complex than just a conflict between models. Seybolt agreed, noting that his presentation had primarily concerned educational techniques in Yenan and their relevance to China after 1949.

5. Munro, "Man, State and School" in China's Developmental Experience, pp. 133-134.

II. PHILOSOPHICAL BASES

Donald Munro picked up on various themes in Seybolt's and Hu's remarks. He defined two basic attributes of the "new socialist man" in China: the ability to break the barrier between mental and physical labor and to place the interests of a larger group over those of a smaller one.

For Mao, Munro noted, breaking the mental/physical barrier relates directly to the concept of equality. Although efforts to secure equality of economic opportunities and income distribution have been far-reaching, distinctions continue to exist. But the Communists have been remarkably successful in achieving equality of status. To attain this goal, whereby the worker, the peasant, and the intellectual are seen as contributing equally to national development, China has experimented with "role switching" (for example, the hsia fang movement to send youths to the countryside for productive labor).[6] Any sort of status distinction, according to the Chinese, impedes not only national unity (e.g., the relationship between cadres and the common people) but also modernization (e.g., the relationship between managers and workers).[7] Paradoxically, the competing value of "order" leads to the perpetuation of certain clear distinctions between those who give and those who take orders, as reflected in functional forms of address (e.g. "bureau chief" Chang), protocol lists, and modes of transport. In any situation where the values of equality and order are both present, inconsistencies in practice often result.

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6. Role switching is also one way to insure that education is diffused to the countryside. Unfortunately, as Munro pointed out, educational decentralization could be counterproductive because rural students may not receive as good an education as those in the city.

7. For Marx, the mental/manual distinction did psychic damage to the individual; for Mao, the damage is done in terms of dividing the nation into intellectuals and workers.

Speakers at a Morning Session

Anne Fitzgerald
Research Assistant
Committee for Scholarly
Communication with
the People's Republic
of China
National Academy of Sciences

Peter Seybolt
Professor
Department of History
University of Vermont

C.T. Hu
Professor of Education
Teachers College
Columbia University

Donald Munro
Professor
Center for Chinese
Studies
University of Michigan

Munro also pointed out that "education" is an all-encompassing term in China, including school, extra-curricular, and community activities. No clear fact/value or technical/ethical distinction is made. Textbooks in all subjects are replete with normative material. The social utility criterion is used as a measurement of the legitimacy of teaching materials.

Munro concluded his presentation by discussing the view of man held by China's leaders. He noted that, as Communists, they consider man to be malleable and believe that no innate individual defects exist to impede one's educability. Among other things, the educational system is designed to prevent what Westerners call "alienation," i.e. to achieve what Munro called the convergence between what people believe is right and how they can in fact lead their lives.[8] The products of the educational system have a strong sense of purpose and understanding of their roles in connection with the goals of the State.

III. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM TODAY

In his opening remarks, C.T. Hu noted that the conference participants had gathered to draw a picture of what was known about the structure, role, and content of education in China. The conference discussion touched upon five key themes; administration, funding, curriculum, students, and teachers.

A. Administration

During his visit to China with a delegation from the National Committee on United States-China Relations in December, 1972, Professor Michel Oksenberg held detailed conversations with a leading

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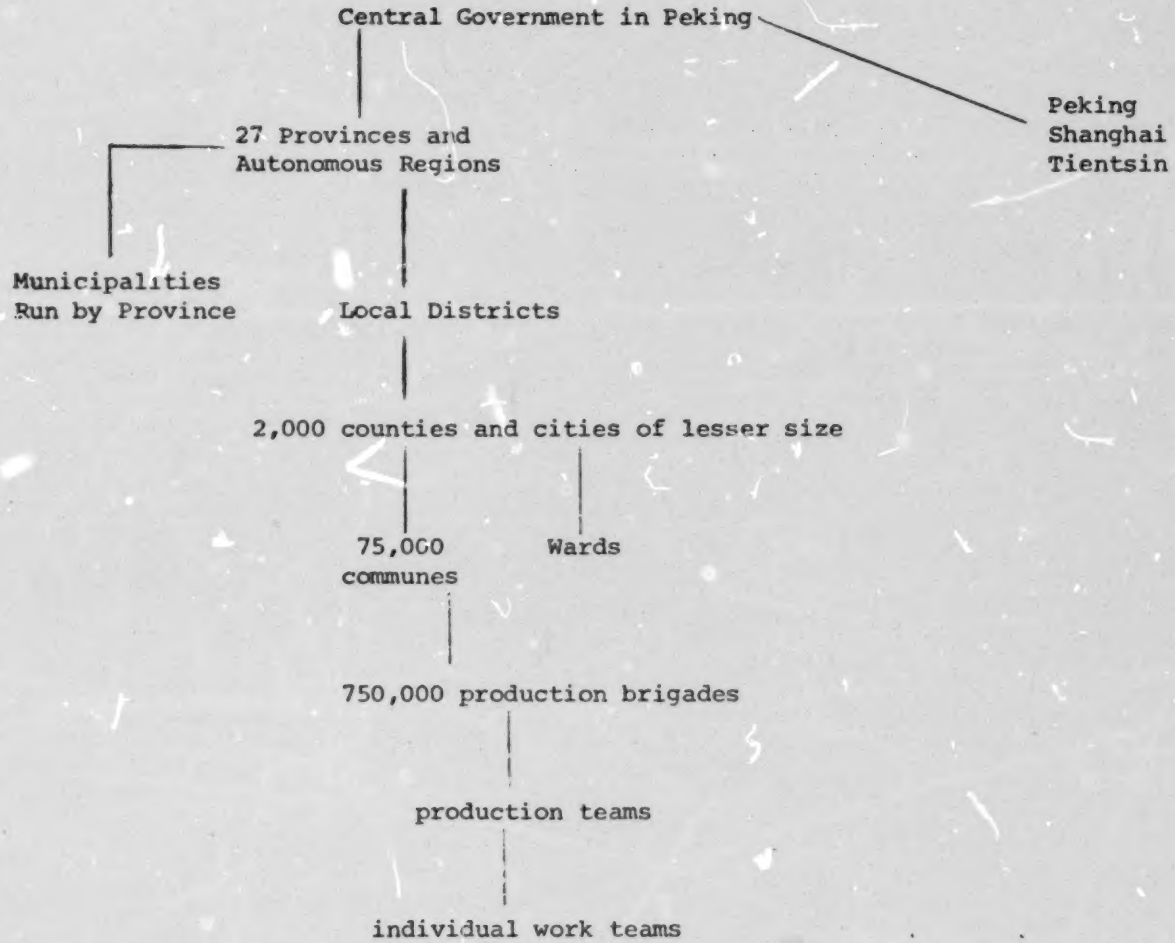
8. Professor Oksenberg preferred the term "disaffection" to "alienation", seeing the latter term as having a Western psychological orientation.

member of the Kiangsu Provincial Education Bureau about China's administrative system in general and educational administration in particular. An overview of the former is contained in Diagram I (page 11), while the administrative model for curriculum planning and fund allocation in Kiangsu (and perhaps nationally) appears in Diagram II (page 12).

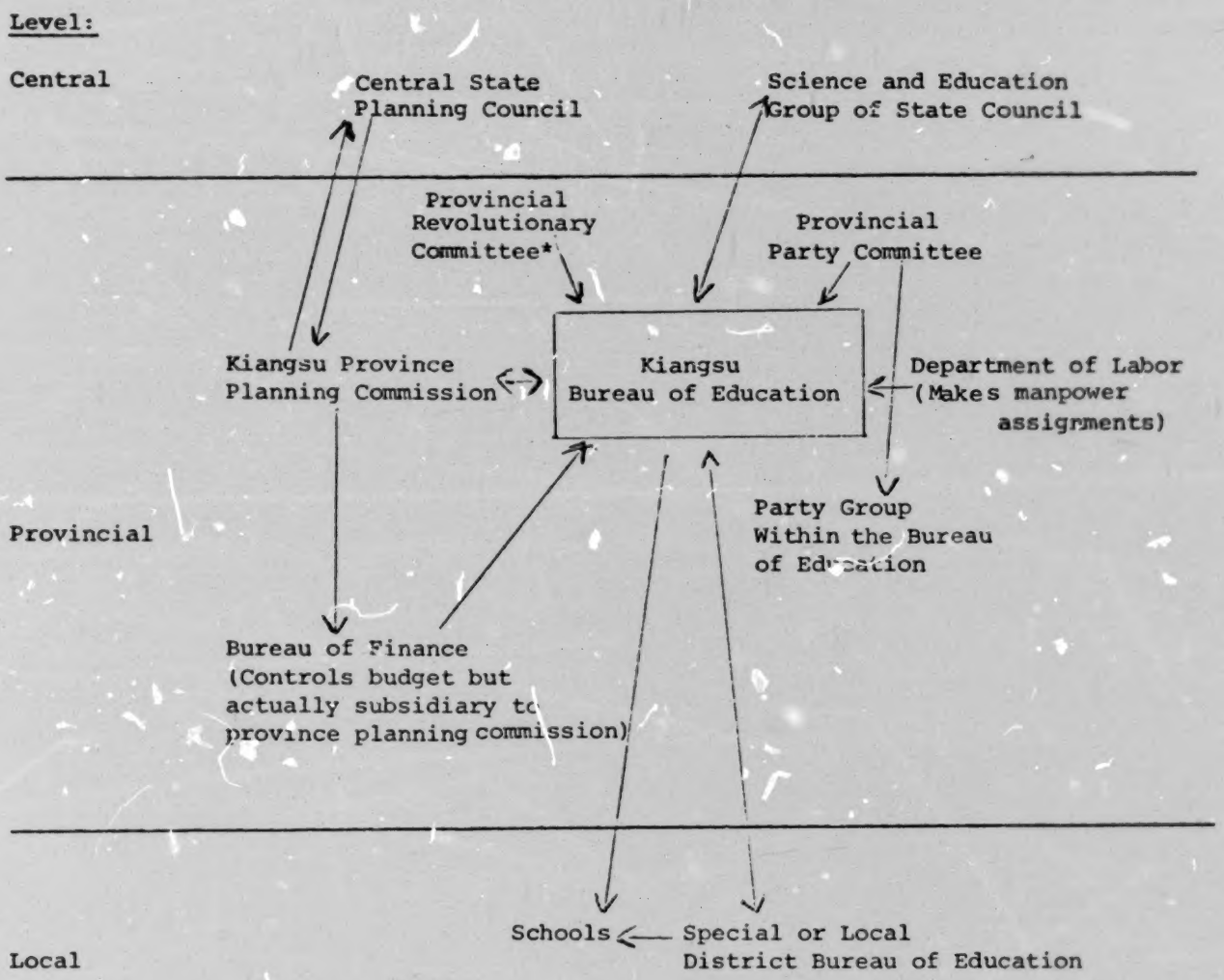
Oksenberg noted that the complexity of the educational system varies with the administrative level at which one is dealing. In rural areas, starting at the bottom of the political hierarchy, the production brigades (approximately the size of a former "village") only manage elementary schools. Communes administer directly one or more elementary schools of somewhat better quality; they also run junior middle schools. The county educational bureaus supervise the work of the commune and in addition operate their own middle schools and teacher training schools (for elementary teachers). In cities, most nurseries and kindergartens are run by the Neighborhood Committees, primary schools by some Neighborhood Committees but mostly by the ward, and high schools by either the ward or municipality. In addition, a municipal Education Bureau runs some of its own nurseries, kindergartens, and primary schools; it has specialized middle schools, and perhaps universities; and it supervises the work of the wards. Provinces have a wide range of universities, middle schools, specialized middle schools (such as for nursing) and experimental middle schools -- administered directly by the provincial Bureau of Education. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, this vast bureaucracy was controlled centrally by a Ministry of Education; at present, the Ministry's functions are handled by the State Council Group for Science and Education, which appears to be a ministry in all but name.

Diagram I*



*All administrative units are fixed, except for the smallest local units -- the individual work teams -- which change seasonally. Each level of government and institution has a Party Committee and a Revolutionary Committee which jointly run the bureaucracy.

Diagram II


Level:
Central
Central State Planning Council
Science and Education Group of State Council
Provincial Revolutionary Committee*
Provincial Party Committee
Kiangsu Province Planning Commission
Kiangsu Bureau of Education
Department of Labor (Makes manpower assigrments)
Party Group Within the Bureau of Education
Provincial
Bureau of Finance (Controls budget but actually subsidiary to province planning commission)
Schools
Special or Local District Bureau of Education
Local

*The Revolutionary Committee is often defined as a "3 in 1" organization, with representatives from the People's Liberation Army, students, local administration, teachers, and factories -- thus it is closer to a "5 in 1" or "6 in 1" organization. The Revolutionary Committee is to a significant degree coterminous with the Party Committee, but within the school the inclusion of all interested parties is an effort to provide a measure of popular participation in the decision-making process.

The operation of Diagram II is explained under Planning and Funding.

The provincial Educational Bureaus formulate curricula and financial policies and coordinate their decisions with central planners in Peking. Although provincial and central planning is important, especially with regard to financial policy, local schools themselves have the capacity to innovate and experiment within the guidelines set by higher levels.[9]

B. Administrators

The people who actually administer the school system are an eclectic group consisting of:

1. Trained educators -- mostly older, professional administrators, some with Western training and orientation, who have been in the school system for decades.

2. Party cadres -- older cadres assigned to the educational system in the 1950's, many with expertise in educational matters.

3. Cultural administrators -- somewhat younger people who came to the schools from the army or "Mao Tse-tung Thought" teams at the time of the Cultural Revolution. Many are experienced in administration (for example, as a factory administrator rather than laborer), but not in the educational field.

4. Local activists -- persons emerging as leaders within an educational unit at the time of, or after, the Cultural Revolution.

5. In rural areas, poor and middle peasants whose roles are as yet undetermined and whose activities represent an important area for future investigation.

The mixture of training and educational philosophy represented by so divergent a group has certainly contributed to the tentativeness of much of Chinese education today. One explanation of why reports vary so greatly is that visitors have talked with different types of administrators and teachers at different times and places.

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9. Albert Yee, "Schools and Progress in the People's Republic of China in Educational Researcher, July, 1973.

It is highly unlikely that any one of these groups will gain the upper hand in the next few years, and they presumably will continue working with each other, effecting compromises on both curriculum and financial matters.

C. Planning and Funding

The planning and budgeting process proceeds in three steps. First, the Central State Planning Commission includes a section on education in the "guidelines" or "suggestions" (relating to fiscal, manpower, and material supply policies) it sends to the provincial Planning Commission and the provincial Education Bureau.[10] At the same time, the Bureau received additional "guidelines" from the Science and Education Group of the State Council concerning matters which the State Council deems of priority -- e.g. the kind of schools to build during the coming year, etc. The Bureau then subdivides the projected planning figures from the two central organizations among the educational units under its control, suggesting, as did the Center, that these figures be "considered" when the counties and municipalities draw up their budgets and plans.

The next important step in the planning process begins "from the bottom up," as the Chinese say. The local units develop preliminary budgets, exceeding the suggested figures if they believe that additional money, manpower, and supplies can be provided entirely by

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10. The greatest percentage of operating costs in the budget is devoted to manpower, mostly in the form of teachers' salaries (perhaps as much as 70% of money spent on salaries comes from the State, according to Professor Oksenberg). Salaries are set by the central government and are based on ranking systems and pay zones for all of China. Local departments of education and schools generally may not deviate from this national pay scale, but can save money by giving work points instead of salaries to non-professionals (or paraprofessionals) participating in educational administration or instruction.

the unit itself. Such self-financing is encouraged wherever and whenever possible. For example, if the unit decides to finance and undertake construction by itself, it need not include proposed building expenses and labor in its financial plan to the provincial Education Bureau. However, most projects do involve cost sharing, and thus have to be approved at higher levels.

Each local unit submits its plans to the provincial Education Bureau. Requests are reconciled according to the amounts each unit desires, the amount the Center appears to be willing to provide, and the amount for which the Bureau is willing to ask. Once the Bureau completes its overall planning, it submits its plan to the provincial Planning Commission for inclusion in the total budget. Another modification takes place as the Planning Commission balances plans from all provincial departments, deciding what the province can supply itself and what must be requested from the Center.

However the Central State Planning Commission may wish to allocate to another province some of the resources -- such as newly trained teachers -- which the province would like to retain within its boundaries. Accordingly, the State Planning Commission initiates the third step -- "from the top down" -- and convenes conferences with delegates from each provincial Planning Commission to reconcile and set all provincial plans and budgets, including the educational components.[11]

Before final decisions are made on allotments for education, the educational sections of each province's plans are aggregated and

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11. Although each province sends a negotiating team, the team does not include an educational specialist. Perhaps, as Oksenberg noted, this part of the overall plan is not thought significant enough.

sent to the Science and Education Group for discussion (the exact role the Group plays at this point is a matter for further research). To insure that its plans are given a full hearing, the provincial Education Bureau sometimes sends its own people to Peking to consult with the Group. In effect, there is a complex relationship between the central Group and the provincial Bureau. The Group earlier had indicated the types of programs and construction it would like to see emphasized. The Bureau had responded and also initiated action to fund programs not previously considered by the Group. At the Peking gatherings, the two come together and enter into discussions with the comprehensive planners.

Once the State Planning Commission sets the plan and budget, the provinces and the county divide the allotments among their subunits. This is done, as at the center, in conference. Once the figures for education are set, they can not be changed unless by approval of higher levels.

Schools receive money from two sources other than the State. Students pay small sums for textbooks and extra-curricular activities, and also are assessed a slight general fee for attending school. This second fee has both a practical and symbolic meaning, providing some funds for school activities and emphasizing the individual's contribution to the school's maintenance. Although the actual fees charged are unknown, they seem to represent little financial hardship to most Chinese families.[12]

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12. Of course, as the student gets older, the "opportunity" costs for keeping him in school increase; wages foregone become more important than fees paid. If the student is still in school after 11 or 12 years of age, he will not be adding money to the total family income and the fees can become a burden unless a scholarship is provided.

Additional school income is from factories and communes. The school may sign a contract with these work units and, drawing upon student labor, produce a certain amount of material for use by both the units and itself. This program ties in nicely with the work/study programs favored in one form or another by the government over the past twenty years.

D. Curriculum

For Mao Tse-tung, the educational system must be integrated with the needs of economic development. As the economy becomes more complex, more specialized forms of curricula and training can be introduced. But in China today, with fundamental production needs paramount, training and curricula are aimed at fitting people more easily into the lowest levels of the production system. Hence liberal arts education, apart from basic political courses, is not now in vogue; courses in agricultural science and machine operation are, however, since they presumably help increase worker productivity. (The details of curriculum content remain questions for future research.)

While tailoring programs to fit national needs and to prevent a glut of overtrained, unneeded specialists, the Chinese have also shortened the duration of schooling at all levels (though they stress that this change, initiated since the Cultural Revolution, is still an experimental effort). The reasons for this shortening are complex, involving the ideology, economics, and social philosophy stressed by the government in recent years:

1. Ideological: Extended schooling divorces students (the "new intellectual elite") from the masses and makes them feel like a special interest group. At the height of the Cultural Revolution, the ideological commitment to bring students and the masses (as well as the leaders and the led) closer together was the most important consideration for the shortening of the school program.

2. Economic: Extra years of education require an additional financial commitment and keep people out of the labor force.

3. Pedagogic: The need to make education more effective and relevant to the needs of the individual and society by combining theory and practice. Mao has called for simplifying the curricula in elementary and middle schools as well as in universities, and for devoting more time to learning outside the confines of the school.

One danger of this shortened school term is the possible failure to produce scientists capable of carrying on the quality of research and sophisticated work developed by the older, often Western-trained, scientific and technical elite. Professor Oksenberg asked whether a nation which has not graduated a class from its leading universities for over seven years can hope to achieve true self-reliance. He felt that the effort to avoid producing another scientific elite (or indeed any elite) might eventually make China dependent on foreign technology and technicians.

C.T. Hu approached Oksenberg's question from a different perspective. He noted that, according to Mao's own prescription, the training of lower level technicians was a more important priority than the training of higher level specialists. During his visit in China last year, Hu found no sense of crisis over the lack of a newly trained scientific elite (or any worries about having to import advanced technology). He felt that no one in the People's Republic is as yet sure how industrial, military, and defense-related programs will develop, and hence are unclear what demands will be made on the educational system, or what types of special training will be most needed and in what proportions.

E. Students

Before the Cultural Revolution, the urban middle school was essentially a college prep-school, according to Susan Shirk, a political scientist who has visited China and also interviewed a large number of emigres in Hong Kong. Students were especially anxious to attend the university in view of the major alternative -- going to work in the countryside. (Obtaining a job in a factory was possible for relatively few, because the industrial work force was expanding very slowly.)

In pursuing their education, however, students lived under a cloud of uncertainty, wondering what the criteria would be for selecting those continuing on to the university. Many felt they would not be chosen since they neither had a proletarian background nor were members of the Community Youth League.[13] Those who were of worker/peasant background or members of the Youth League, however, assumed that students with good grades had the best opportunity to go on. This uncertainty, according to Shirk, led to much interpersonal tension among students before 1966.

Another important element of concern for students was the Youth League itself. Originally established as a vehicle for transforming both the school environment and the extra-curricular activities of youth, it gradually acquired a reputation for having a great deal of power over the lives of students. Students become aware that a mistake (ideological or personal) in the presence of a League member

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13. Until the Cultural Revolution, the Youth League was run by older party members. New members of the League were not elected by students; instead, they were selected by the League members in the pan (a pan is a "class", or classroom group, which in many cases stays together as a unit for as long as six years).

could ruin a potential career.[14] At the time of the Cultural Revolution, the Youth League was criticized for being a small elite group of individuals who enjoyed exploiting their authority. The present composition of the League is unknown, as are the composition and functions of other vanguard youth organizations and their relationship to both students and the party.[15]

Other changes in educational policy since the Cultural Revolution have added a further note of uncertainty regarding a student's educational career. Since about 1968, virtually all middle school graduates have been assigned, for periods ranging from several months to several years, to either factories, rural communes, service organizations, or the armed forces. A primary reason for this requirement of practical work before university study is similar to that offered for the shortening of schooling: to prevent the emergence of an educated elite by placing all young people in contact with workers, peasants, and soldiers. Reactions by individual students apparently have varied widely, and Chinese authorities admit to encountering some dissatisfaction from those sent to the countryside.

In recent years, moreover, selection of students for admission to universities has depended in large part upon how well they have adapted to, and labored on behalf of, the work unit to which they are assigned. The work unit nominates candidates to receive higher education, and special efforts have been made to recruit students

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14. Many League activists have been popular and admired as sincere individuals or true believers; others have been accused of using political activism as a route for self-advancement.

15. A second criticism was that the League had let in "undesirables", the latter defined as those from "bad class" families (i.e. the bourgeoisie).

from peasant and worker backgrounds. (The manner in which these selections are made, and the success of this procedure, deserve further inquiry). There have been recent indications, however, that the work requirement is being relaxed, and that students desiring to enroll in certain fields (such as the arts and language) are again being admitted to several universities directly from middle school.

F. Teachers

The pivotal role in the educational process is still played by the teacher, according to Huang Mei-hsia of the University of California at Berkeley, a former elementary school teacher in China during the 1950's and 1960's. But teachers are currently facing a dilemma with regard to teaching methods. Should they teach using the inductive method (thereby encouraging student initiative in problem-solving) or simply instruct, requiring rote memorization of course work? And if teachers decide to teach inductively, have they had appropriate training to do so? (Relatively little is known about teacher training and retraining in China today.)

Mrs. Huang noted that the teacher has a great deal of responsibility both inside and outside the schools. Inside, he must gear the material to the interests of the students, the requirements of their careers, and the needs of the state. Outside, he often acts in a "burgher" capacity, helping to solve student problems, deal with parents, and assist in a general way with the education of the community.

CONCLUSION

Although the conference focused on the formal educational structure, participants constantly stressed that one had to consider the

totality of "learning mechanisms" which the individual encounters. An additional week of discussion would hardly have been sufficient to touch upon all aspects of informal education.

As it was, the workshop sessions barely scratched the surface of China's formal educational system. The questions listed in the appendix are indicative of our incomplete understanding of how a person is educated in China today, how he retains his training through in-service education, and the mechanisms used to reinforce what he has learned. Hopefully, future visitors will add to our knowledge of China's educational structure, and will pose new questions to replace the ones asked by participants at Wingspread.

What the conference did, and did well, was to stimulate considerable thought about the role that education plays in Chinese society and to consider this question from a comparative perspective, drawing on the participants' knowledge of education in Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere in Asia.

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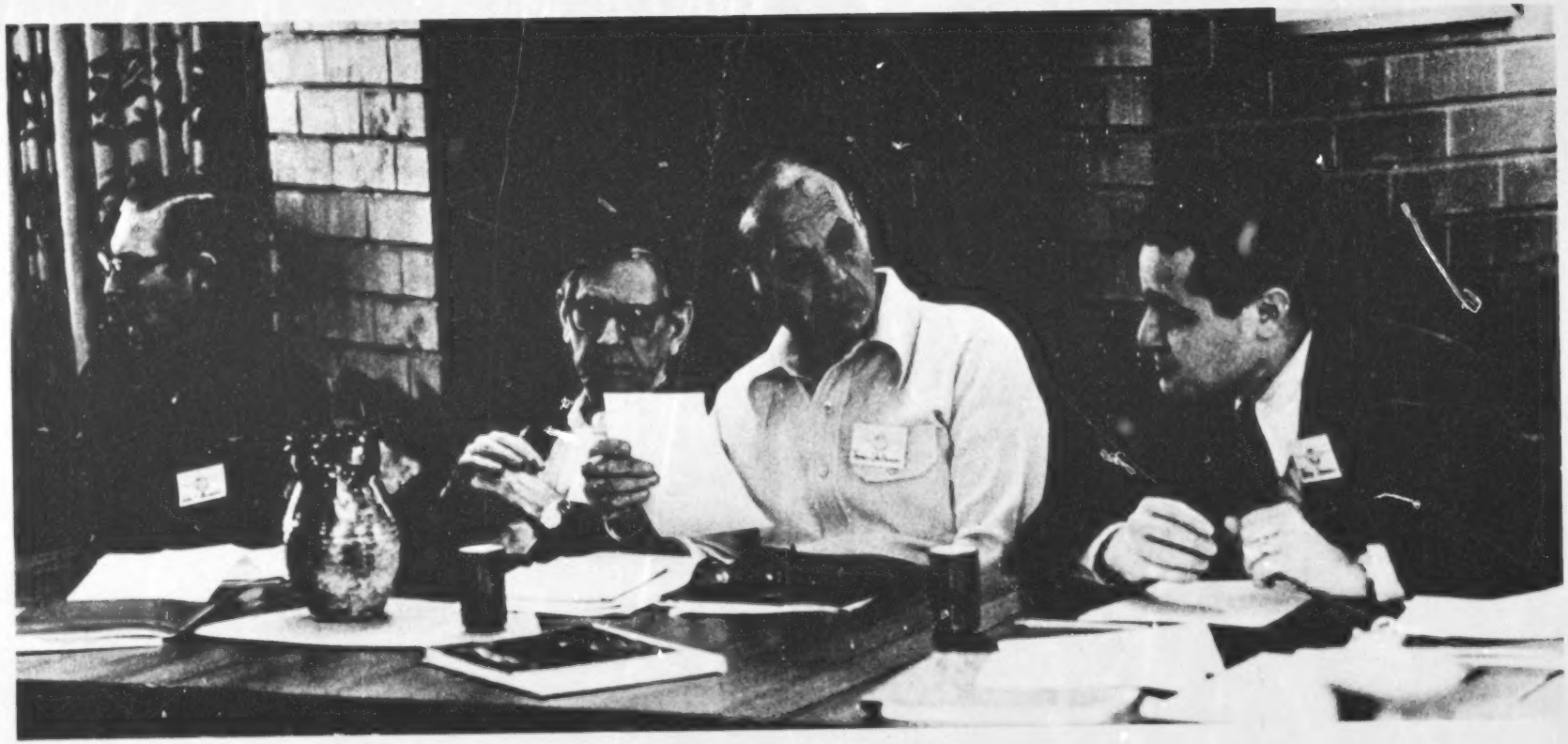
16. The question of what Americans could learn from China's development is the theme of China's Developmental Experience, ed. by Michel Oksenberg.



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APPENDIX

The workshop sessions demonstrated that more was known about education in China than most participants individually had realized. At the same time, it highlighted numerous areas where little is known or where observations appear to be contradictory. A review session on the last day of the conference produced a number of recommendations for subsequent visitors on how information can most effectively be obtained and what areas of inquiry could most usefully be employed.

A. SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

A visitor to the People's Republic of China will not get very far without some prior knowledge of both China and interviewing techniques. Although the following list of suggestions offered by conference participants is by no means exhaustive, it does provide a general framework in which interviews might be profitably conducted. It is designed primarily to assist the average visitor, not the specialist in survey research, who might find the interviewing techniques employed by others to be helpful.

Interviewing Techniques

Before going to China, one should read as widely as possible about past and current developments there, especially in areas of particular interest to the traveller. Such periodicals as the Far Eastern Economic Review, Peking Review and the China Quarterly are good places to start. If one has the time, a close reading of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service for the People's Republic of China and the Survey of the Mainland Press in China (both U.S. government publications) can give one an idea of the issues presently

confronting the people he will meet. Reviewing reports of recent visitors may also help one to formulate questions and avoid covering ground already explored by others.

A knowledge of specific issues can help a visitor in making in-depth comments and asking meaningful questions. It is important that the questioner appear to know something about a subject he is raising if the Chinese are to take him seriously and expand discussions beyond the "routine response" level.

Each traveller should prepare a modest set of questions which he would like to explore in China. These should relate to issues about which he has some prior information or knowledge, and be designed to generate further questions based on his observations. For example, if one has studied the role of paraprofessionals in other cultures, he might pursue the following line of inquiry: how many times did a paraprofessional visit your school last month? Did he actually talk to you? About what? For how long? Do you know if this paraprofessional also serves elsewhere? How is he paid? Is one tested on what the paraprofessional teaches? How do you and your students use the information taught by a paraprofessional? A more general request for a description of the paraprofessional's role is likely to yield an equally general and highly theoretical response.

It is also helpful to have an opportunity to stay in one place over a relatively long period of time, if possible. Such a request should be made during consultations with the Chinese when setting up the itinerary, rather than enroute when scheduling changes can be more difficult for your hosts to arrange.

It is best not to challenge basic principles, but rather to ask about concrete elements of a particular situation. For example, do not ask why something is wrong but rather how the Chinese are compensating for a specific problem they admittedly face.

When unsatisfactory answers are given, it often pays to drop the questioning temporarily and to pick up the line of inquiry later with a different person. If answers seem dubious, check them later with other people, being sure not to embarrass the person with whom one first talked.

Forego generalizing about what is going on in China from one conversation. Ask similar questions at various places wherever possible. Remember that different answers will be obtained from different people, and this may represent either empirical differences, uncertainty about what the policy is, or differences with regard to the implementation of policies in various localities.

Seek to talk with people who are, as closely as possible, your professional counterparts and who can identify with you.

The smaller the group with which one is talking, the greater the chance that questions will be answered in detail. Save the most detailed questions for such occasions.

Try to talk with parents as well as administrators about their involvement in the schools, and the functions they see schools serving for the community. If possible, ask the same questions of the children.

Toward the end of any tour, you should go back through your notes and ask guides to see if they can obtain information on any questions for which clarification is needed. If you forget to do

this, you can write the relevant organizations for information once the trip is over. The Chinese might not respond to such written questions -- but then, again, they might.

B. AREAS OF INQUIRY

What follows is a series of concrete questions, growing out of the workshop discussion, which might be fruitful areas of inquiry for future visitors.

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS

1. What are the role and responsibilities of the central government in relation to: a) administration, b) general policy, and c) curriculum content?

2. Who handles day-to-day administration in the provincial and local education bureaus, planning commissions, and schools? What are the backgrounds of these people and how are they hired?

3. What is the administrative system within universities, and how are university administrators chosen?

4. How is the physical plant of schools organized? What are the differences in this respect between primary, junior middle and senior middle schools?

5. What is the current status of the minpan schools? What do they cost to operate, and who pays the bills? What is the actual extent of local community control of these schools? What is their relationship to other state schools? Roughly what proportion of primary and secondary schools are minpan?

6. How do schools currently relate to local production units, both administratively and financially?

7. What different types of special schools are there, and who administers them? Are there special schools for those with learning disabilities, slow learners, etc? Are they administered by specialists or generalists, and how are such specialists trained?

8. What else does a school do beside teach? Are there medical and athletic, or counselling and guidance programs? If the school is also a community center, do athletic and cultural events take place there, when is it open, and is there someone present to assist those with non-academic needs?

9. What functions do individual members of the community see the school fulfilling? Is there a commonality of interests or are there diverse views in the community with regard to the perception of school functions?

10. Has the Trade Union of Educational Workers been revived? If so, what are its current operations and functions? How and by whom is it staffed, both at the center and locally?

11. Do the revolutionary committees of educational organizations and institutions actually represent a diversity within the population of the respective area, and do they make a substantial input into decision-making? If not, why not? What types of issues do they consider? What did the revolutionary committee you are interviewing discuss at their last meeting?

12. What is the nature and extent of communication between administrators and the revolutionary and the party committees, in relation to school, student, and teacher problems. When problems are identified, how does the community go about solving them?

13. Are community organizations, other than the school itself, involved in evaluation of students and educational materials?

FUNDING

1. To what extent does the central government now control school budgets (in contrast to the local funding control apparent during the Cultural Revolution)?

2. What percentage of national, provincial, and local budgets is spent on education? What is the per-student expenditure rate?

3. What are the principal categories and items in the typical school, commune, and education bureau budget?

4. What is the budget-planning and administration process and who is responsible for it? How is a decision revised if there is disagreement between local and higher levels? Explore one specific example of a changed decision.

5. Do schools and local units lobby for increased funding from above, and if so, how do they bring their ideas to the attention of their superiors?

6. Do funding levels and per-capita ratios differ for urban, suburban, and rural schools? If so, are they great enough to cause serious discrepancies in the quality of education received in various areas of the country?

7. Are funds allocated specifically for educational research? By whom, in what amounts, and what types of research issues now have greatest priority?

8. What types of capital construction can be decided on by communes or brigades without reference to the Provincial Bureau of Education; by the Education Bureaus without reference to the Central government?

9. What proportion of a teacher's salary is paid by the local community, the province, and the State? What are the pay zones and pay scales for teachers? How are these determined, and how often are they reviewed?

10. How much money is collected in school fees in each grade at the elementary and secondary levels? What proportion of family income does this fee represent? Are there any other fees which a family must pay for a child's education?

11. What kinds of contracts do schools sign with factories and communes? Is the money earned subtracted from the amount of money the school receives from the Province or State?

12. What are the criteria for scholarship awards? Who is likely to get a scholarship? How much money is awarded per person at each grade level from primary school through college?

13. How are paraprofessional and nonprofessional educational workers paid and how much do they receive?

14. What allocations are made for the Communist Youth League, and other vanguard organizations for youth, as well as for sporting and cultural activities?

CURRICULUM

1. What is the length of schooling in years at each level? How many months each year are students in school? Days per month? Hours per day? In what time blocks? Do time requirements vary from place to place and are there regional or urban/rural differences?

2. What courses are taught by grade? What is the content of each course, and how often is the course taught per week and per year? How much variation is there between provinces and between schools, and how much selection of courses is exercised by the student?

3. Who writes and publishes textbooks? How is material to be incorporated in texts decided upon? How are texts distributed? What is the extent of standardization? What leeway do teachers have for adapting texts to local conditions? Can a visitor obtain these texts for examination?

4. What foreign texts do the Chinese rely upon? How are these texts modified to fit into the Chinese setting?

5. What types of tests are there? What is the philosophy behind testing? Are there special tests to get into the universities? How are university exams prepared and taken?

6. What foreign languages are taught in addition to English? At what level are they begun? What is the current status of specialized language schools throughout the country? Who teaches in the language schools (foreigners?), and for what types of jobs are their students being trained?

7. How are audio-visual techniques being used in Chinese classrooms? How widely are they used? Who prepares movies, slides and tapes? What role do arts and crafts play for Chinese children? What is the content of audio-visual and crafts lessons?

8. What is the role of field trips to museums, communes, and factories? How often are they? What themes are stressed during field trips? Are students tested on what they learn as a result of field trips?

9. What kinds of games and dances are taught to children? How are toys used in teaching children? What is the relationship between play periods and education?

10. What is the Chinese concept of inductive learning? How is this concept used by teachers? Is it used in combination with instruction by rote learning as a pedagogical technique?

11. What is the educational philosophy underlying curriculum developments in China? What studies on educational psychology are being prepared in China? What role does Western educational philosophy and psychology play in China, if any?

12. Is a period of extended labor still required before entering college? How much labor do students engage in during the school year? Does this occur in a series of short periods or a single long block of time? Do students work near their schools? What is the relationship of labor to courses of study (if any)?

13. Is the labor requirement changing for some students (such as those specializing in language, mathematics or fine arts which may need greater continuity of training)? What is the attitude of students toward labor?

14. Are students still being sent to factories and villages for investigation of developments there either during or after their studies? Do their reports embody recommendations for change, and are they taken seriously in policy planning?

15. What types of specialized, short-term education are conducted in China? Who is involved? What kinds of educational materials are used for short-term education? Are they different from materials used for regular curricula? If so, in what ways?

16. Are special curricula prepared for the education of minority groups? What aspects of the minority heritage are incorporated in these curricula? Have there been problems in developing minority education curricula? What changes have been made over the years?

17. Are there university students being trained in the humanities to succeed the old, classically trained professors? How are they selected? What special courses do they receive? Are the classics themselves receiving emphasis?

18. What is the current state of professional schools in the universities? How have they been changed by educational experimentation since the Cultural Revolution? Where are the doctors, engineers, chemists, etc. now being trained, and do the universities still play a major role in this regard?

19. What types of higher level research programs are there? Who formulates the programs?

20. What is the state of pure research; how is research information disseminated?

STUDENTS

1. What percentage of people of elementary and secondary school age enroll in school? Who does not go to school and why?

2. What percentage of those beginning school actually finish each level? What is the drop-out rate, and what are the reasons that students cease their schooling?

3. Are there perceivable sex differences in the type of education received, or the length of time a student spends in school?

4. How do students perceive the role of examinations and personal evaluations by teachers as part of the process of selection for higher education?

5. What are the principal student criticisms of teachers and administrators? Of what they are taught? Of the relationship of education to their future work?

6. Do students have any degree of choice with regard to their careers? If so, how do they go about getting the type of position desired?

7. Are there a significant number of suicides or nervous breakdowns among students? What are the principal tensions involved?

8. What is the current membership, administration, and activities of the Communist Youth League, the Red Guards, the Little Red Guards, and other student organizations? What are student attitudes toward these organizations? Do youth organizations contribute to tensions? What percentage of students in a given school are in these youth organizations? Why do they join?

TEACHERS

1. How are teachers trained? How many teacher-training schools are there in the country? What specializations are taught, if any? Is there a "class background" criteria for teachers or periodic examination of political thought?

2. To what extent do student teachers receive "in-service" training? Are they encouraged to develop curricula and teaching techniques according to their field of study?

3. Who pays teachers during their in-service training? What does such training consist of?

4. What agency determines a teacher's certification? Is there still an emphasis on deprofessionalization which mitigates the need for certification?

5. What is the relationship of the teacher to the administrative hierarchy? To what extent is he supervised when implementing curriculum units?

6. Who assigns an individual teacher, evaluates his performance, makes career decisions - at the primary, secondary and university levels?

7. How much leeway do teachers have in adopting or changing texts? Can they alter texts when available materials are of little use to students? Who decides what materials are to be used?

8. What is the teacher's involvement outside the classroom? Does he visit parents at homes and workplaces to discuss student problems? Is he involved in some form of neighborhood education?

9. What kinds of physical labor do teachers engage in outside the classroom? Is field study part of the labor requirement for student teachers?

10. How are teachers utilizing their time inside and outside the classroom? What did the teacher do yesterday, today? Last weekend? What does he have planned for tomorrow? Next week? Next month? How many field trips has he made with his students recently? What does he see as the role of outside classroom activities in a student's education?

11. To what extent are paraprofessionals used? What tasks are they given? What is the pay scale for paraprofessionals? Are paraprofessionals given any instruction in the teaching techniques to be used?

INFORMAL EDUCATION

1. How are educational values disseminated outside of school?

2. How are the May 7th schools operated and by whom? Where are they located, who is currently attending them and for how long? What is studies there? How are these schools financed?

3. Are there formal adult education programs? If so, what types?

4. How much in-service training in factories and communes do workers/students receive at each level?

5. What is the impact of the national media in educating the people--movies, television, newspapers, periodicals, literature, comics? How are the media used; what changes have taken place in their use over time?

6. What techniques are used to reinforce literacy outside the schools? How successful are they?

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EDUCATION IN CHINA

Wingspread - April 1973

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WINGSPREAD
THE CONFERENCE PLACE

The building Frank Lloyd Wright called Wingspread, situated on a rolling prairie site just north of Racine, Wisconsin, was designed in 1938 as a residence for the Johnson family. In 1960, through the gift of Mr. and Mrs. H.F. Johnson, it became the headquarters of The Johnson Foundation and began its career as an educational conference center.

In the years since, it has been the setting for many conferences and meetings dealing with subjects of regional, national, and international interest. It is the hope of the Foundation's trustees that Wingspread will take its place increasingly as a national institution devoted to the free exchange of ideas among peoples.

The rolling expanse of the Midwestern prairies was considered a natural setting for Wingspread. In the limitless earth the architect envisioned a freedom and movement. The name Wingspread was an expression of the nature of the house, reflecting aspiration through spread wings—a symbol of soaring inspiration.